

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Joins Campaign to Reduce Fatal Crashes

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Jan. 25, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced that his office is partnering with The Advertising Council in a new ad campaign aimed at reducing the number of fatal car crashes involving teens and young adults.

Goddard joins a coalition of state Attorneys General and consumer protection agencies that will work to reduce reckless driving. The Arizona Chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and AAA Arizona are also partners in this campaign.

Car crashes are the number one cause of death among teens and young adults. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data show that more than 300,000 teens are injured in car crashes, nearly 8,000 are involved in fatal crashes and more than 3,500 are killed each year. In 2005, Arizona counted 206 fatalities in crashes involving young drivers between 15-20 years old.

NHTSA research shows that teen drivers are involved in more than five times as many fatal crashes as adults. Young drivers are more likely to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns and die in an SUV rollover.

The campaign, called *UR the Spokesperson*, targets young people ages 15 to 21. The campaign encourages them to speak up when they are in the car with friends and don't feel safe. It also seeks to increase awareness about reckless driving and educate teens about how to be safe drivers by focusing on safe speeds, avoiding distractions and wearing seat belts.

"Young drivers can be good drivers if they pay attention, drive at safe speeds and wear their seatbelts," Goddard said. "We know teen friendships are vitally important, and teen drivers will listen to their peers because they don't want to damage the relationship. So if you're with someone who's driving recklessly, you need to speak up to protect yourself and everyone else on the road."

The *UR the Spokesperson* campaign includes a series of public service advertisements (PSAs), a new Web site and a soon-to-be launched contest. Research shows that young drivers are often more likely to listen to their friends than to adults, which is why the *UR the Spokesperson* campaign is using a peer-to-peer approach.

"This campaign gives parents an opportunity to talk with their teens and encourage them to speak up when they do not feel safe in a car," said Jessica Smith, the Arizona SADD Coordinator. "It takes great courage for teens to tell their friends they don't feel safe, and they build that courage from hearing the message at home, in the community and with their friends."

"The issue of teen drivers affects not just these drivers, but everyone on the road," says Linda Gorman, AAA Arizona's public affairs manager. "Over 63 percent of the people killed in teen-driver crashes are people other than the teen driver. In Arizona, that number is even higher at over 73 percent. That is why it is crucial teens are prepared to handle the risks of the road."

For more information on the campaign and to see the ads, please visit www.URtheSpokesperson.com.

###